



## Mubarak confers with Christopher, other U.S. officials

WASHINGTON (USIA) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak Monday began a series of meetings with key members of the Clinton administration.

He had a meeting and working luncheon with Secretary of State Warren Christopher, met with the secretaries of commerce and agriculture and with Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell.

The Egyptian president was scheduled to meet with President Bill Clinton Tuesday.

There was no press briefing following Mr. Mubarak's discussions with Mr. Christopher, but prior to their meeting State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said that U.S. officials would discuss the Middle East peace process with the Egyptian leader.

The spokesman pointed out that the United States and Egypt have been supporting the peace process. Egypt is the only Arab country to have concluded a peace treaty with Israel.

Mr. Boucher said the United States continues to be confident that the parties will return to direct Arab-Israeli peace talks on April 20 in Washington.

"We continue to have discussions with the various parties about the (Palestinian) deportees issue and the other questions," he said, adding the United States continues to stress the importance of returning to the negotiation table on April 20.

He said Mr. Christopher and Mr. Clinton would bring Mr. Mubarak up-to-date on U.S. discussions with the Palestinians, who were in Washington late last month. The Egyptian leader also will be briefed on U.S. contacts with the other parties to the Arab-Israeli peace process and on "some of the more specific issues that are being discussed," Mr. Boucher said.

"I think the Egyptian government has made clear that it believes it's important for the parties to attend the peace talks on April 20," he said.

Earlier in the day, Mr. Mubarak had separate meeting with Senator Mitchell, Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy and Commerce Secretary Ron Brown.

Mr. Espy, in remarks to journalists following his meeting said the discussion centred upon the

trade relationship between our two countries."

"Egypt is a very important market for our agricultural commodities, and the United States is very interested in maintaining a very productive relationship," Mr. Espy said.

Mr. Espy said they discussed agricultural trade issues and the export enhancement programme.

"I assured the president we would be continuing — in fact, even increasing — the relationship between our two nations," Mr. Espy said.

Mr. Brown, characterising his meeting with the Egyptian leader as "a reunion between two old friends," said he had the opportunity to spend "a good deal of time" with President Mubarak when he accompanied President Clinton to Cairo about a year and a half ago.

Mr. Brown said he indicated to Mr. Mubarak that the U.S. "is eager to enhance trade and to try to help him increase American business investment in Egypt."

"We have a good and cordial and close relationship, and I look forward, on behalf of the Clinton administration, to work closely with the president and his administration and the private sector in Egypt," Mr. Brown said.

In response to questions, Mr. Brown said they also discussed opening the American market to the Egyptian products. "I promised him I would take a look at specific markets he mentioned," Mr. Brown added, noting again, "it was a very cordial meeting."

Later in the day, the Egyptian leader met with International Monetary Fund Managing Director Michel Camdessus.

Mr. Camdessus told reporters after his meeting that he congratulated President Mubarak for Egypt's "extraordinary achievements" in economic reforms. He said he saw "only very positive changes" following his visit to Cairo two years ago.

"For me, it was a great pleasure to tell the president that I am delighted to see that the programme has delivered more than expected, but of course, the programme remains immense, the challenges for the countries (of the region) are big.

"We coincided in saying that now we have to take advantage of



Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak (left) Monday meets with U.S. Commerce Secretary Ron Brown (AFP photo)

all that has been started, to create more growth in the country and more investment, and this has to come from the private sector, basically," he said. "And we agree in saying that the priorities now are indeed for maintaining a good, stable, macroeconomic framework, while allowing the enterprises for investment, for creating more jobs opportunities."

Mr. Camdessus said the IMF and Egypt are discussing new programmes for the next three years. "I am quite optimistic about having an agreement in place... within the next three months," he said.

"If needed, we will be there for that," he said in response to a question about further assistance. "And we will continue supporting the efforts of Egypt in all the fields, especially in its negotiations with the rest of the international community."

Following his White House meeting and working luncheon Tuesday with President Clinton, President Mubarak was to confer with Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen and Defense Secretary Les Aspin.

Mr. Boucher told reporters there was continuing cooperation between Egypt and the United States on counterterrorism issues, but Egypt has not passed on any specific information concerning planned acts of terrorism in the United States.

His comments were prompted by news reports that claimed Mr. Mubarak suggested the World Trade Centre explosion could have been prevented if the United States had followed up on information provided by Egypt.

"As you know, there are restrictions on how much we can say in particular about the World Trade Centre," the spokesman said.

"Dole reported that Mr. Mubarak had indicated that U.S. aid "hasn't increased, but inflation has."

reminded reporters. "I think it is important to note that President Mubarak himself said that Egypt did not pass specific information regarding any planned acts of terrorism to the United States."

"We do have continuing cooperation with the Egyptians on counterterrorism issues," Mr. Boucher said. "We look forward to continuing that cooperation."

He said a group made up of personnel from the U.S. embassy in Cairo and personnel from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the United States had met with Egyptian officials in Egypt at various times during the past several months, including a meeting between Feb. 6 and 11.

### Aid 'assured'

THE U.S. intends to maintain its foreign aid levels to Egypt, Senate leaders assured Mr. Mubarak.

Sen. Patrick Leahy, chairman of the defence appropriations sub-committee, told Mr. Mubarak that he would work to influence the White House's foreign assistance package, including the \$2 billion in annual aid to Egypt.

"We have had very strong commitments to Egypt, and we have reiterated those commitments to Egypt, and I don't think anyone wants to do anything to disrupt that economy," Mr. Leahy told reporters after his 90-minute meeting with Mr. Mubarak.

Senate Republican leader Robert Dole, who met later with Mr. Mubarak, said he told Mr. Mubarak that "we ought to continue Egypt's aid at its present level."

Dole reported that Mr. Mubarak had indicated that U.S. aid "hasn't increased, but inflation has."

## Mahdi released after one-day questioning

CAIRO (Agencies) — Sudan's former Prime Minister Saad Al Mahdi was released after authorities detained him for a day for alleged involvement in anti-government activities.

The official Sudan News Agency (SUNA) said security forces freed Al-Mahdi after interrogating him over his "political activities hostile to the Sudanese government."

The former premier's arrest was reported by his supporters in London. The Umma Party, which he leads, said in a statement that soldiers arrested Al Mahdi, his aides and some of his guests at his home in Omdurman.

It said the soldiers took the group to security headquarters in Khartoum for interrogation. They later released the aides, the Umma statement said. The only guest it identified was Abdul Rasoul Al Nour, the former governor of Kordofan.

The party said Mr. Mahdi was arrested for his vocal criticism of the practices of Omar Hassan Al Bashir's Islamic fundamentalist policies, referring to articles and speeches he has made recently.

Lieutenant-General Bashir's military junta toppled Mr. Mahdi's democratically-elected government on June 30, 1990 and banned political parties and other civilian organisations.

Mr. Mahdi, born in 1935, is the Oxford-educated grandson of the man who led a messianic Islamic revolt against Egyptian-British rule of Sudan in the 19th century. He was prime minister from 1966-67 and from 1985-89.

The Ashraq Al Awasat newspaper published in London said Mr. Mahdi's attacks in newspaper articles and a sermon at prayers marking the end of the fasting month of Ramadan two weeks ago angered the government, which is dominated by Islamic fundamentalists led by Mr. Mahdi's brother-in-law Hassan



Sadeq Al Mahdi

Turabi.

Al Hayat said Gen. Bashir accused Mr. Mahdi in a speech last Friday of having made concessions to rebels in southern Sudan and slowing up introduction of Islamic law in the country.

### Sudan backs Libyan plan

Sudan Tuesday praised Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi's plan to impose stricter Islamic rules in his country.

The Transitional National Assembly or parliament issued a statement describing Colonel Qadhafi's decision as "a positive step towards unity."

Colonel Qadhafi, who has implemented a watered down version of Islamic law in Libya, last week unveiled a plan to impose stricter rules like amputating thieves' hands and flogging adulterers on television.

Gen. Bashir reintroduced Islamic law a few months after he came to power in June 1989.

The two neighbouring countries have signed an "integration agreement" providing for close coordination to lead eventually to unity.

Gen. Bashir met with Col. Qadhafi in Libya a week ago to discuss pushing the unity plan forward.

## MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

### Yemeni vice-president visits Muscat

SANAA (R) — Yemen's Vice-President Ali Salem Al Baidh left for Oman Tuesday, becoming the most senior Yemeni official to visit the neighbouring Gulf state since they settled a 25-year-old border dispute six months ago. Diplomats said the visit would result in signing agreements to cooperate in developing the border area including the construction of a road link. Yemen's Reconstruction Minister Abdullah Hussein Al Khurshid has been in Muscat since Saturday to finalise the accords. Ties between the two states improved considerably after they signed last October's border agreement. A delegation from Oman's Chamber of Commerce and Industry visited Yemen in January and signed an agreement to establish a maritime line and build a \$12 million hotel in Taiz province and several joint private-sector industrial projects. Omani oil firm Sa'ad Al Qawi was granted a concession to explore oil in the Mukalla-Sayyut region shortly after the border demarcation agreement was signed.

### Spokesman denies Assad ailing

DAMASCUS (AP) — Syria Monday strongly denied reports that President Hafez Al Assad was in poor health. "Such fabricated and false reports, which have no foundation whatsoever, are not worth comment," presidential spokesman Jubran Kourieh said. Reports that Mr. Assad, 63, is ailing have been circulating since Christmas. The latest was published this week by Britain's Sunday Telegraph, which said Syria was heading towards a succession struggle because of the president's poor health. The report, Mr. Kourieh said, was "part of a renewed hostile campaign against Syria and its role in achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace" in the Middle East. "The president's health is good," the spokesman stressed.

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### First shipload of pilgrims arrived in Saudi Arabia

JEDDAH (AP) — The first shipload of Muslim pilgrims docked at Jeddah port Monday, inaugurating the annual season of Hajj. The Saudi Press Agency said the pilgrims were Indians, who had sailed from Bombay. It did not give their number. Some two million Muslim converge on the kingdom each year for pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina. This year's rituals climax at the end of May.

### Egyptian militants pinpoint ministers' houses

ISMAILIA, Egypt (R) — Egyptian police arrested four Muslim militants Monday for handing out leaflets urging people to attack the holiday homes of cabinet ministers along the Suez Canal, state prosecutor Ahmad Al Shihawi said. Mr. Shihawi said in his statement the four, students from the village of Fayed about 35 kilometres south of Ismailia, were arrested distributing about 2,000 leaflets among villagers urging them to attack the houses of Prime Minister Atif Sedki and other ministers. It was the first time the Suez Canal zone has figured in militant activity since a surge of violence which has killed about 120 people began in March last year. Mr. Shihawi said the four, students at Ismailia's Suez Canal University, were detained for 15 days pending investigation.

Information Minister Safwat Al Sherif, Planning Minister Kamal Ganzouri, Housing Minister Hassaballah Kafrawi, Cabinet Affairs Minister Atif Obeid, and Electricity Minister Maher Abaza are among top officials with holiday homes on a stretch of the canal near Fayed known as "Ministers' Cove. Police launched a bloody series of raids last month to crush the militants who are fighting to set up a purist Islamic state. Militants have fought back with a wave of bomb attacks.

### Mubarak to meet Mitterrand, Balladur on Thursday

PARIS (R) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak will meet French President Francois Mitterrand and Prime Minister Edouard Balladur during a two-day visit to Paris this week, the offices of the president and premier said Monday. Mr. Mubarak, who began a visit to the United States Monday, will meet Mr. Balladur Thursday morning and then lunch with Mr. Mitterrand. Mr. Mubarak will be in Paris Wednesday and Thursday on his way back to Cairo from the United States, French diplomatic officials said.

### Britain to help Kurds fight cereal pest

LONDON (R) — The British government said Monday it was offering financial and technical assistance to help Iraqi Kurds fight a cereal crop bug called the sunne pest. The Overseas Development Administration (ODA) said its £1.3 million (\$2 million) contribution would provide a package of measures to help the Kurds maximise their food production, including protecting cereals against the sunne pest. If the pest is left untreated much of the harvest would be destroyed causing a serious shortage of food, the ODA said. Also included are animal vaccination, fertilisers and seed for the spring vegetable planting season, the ODA said, adding that the project would be managed by a British charity, the Save the Children Fund, which already operates in northern Iraq.

### Mahathir leaves Iran after trade deals

NICOSIA (R) — Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Mahathir Mohamad left Tehran Tuesday after negotiating deals to boost trade with Iran to \$200 million annually, Tehran Radio said. Mr. Mahathir flew to Qeshm Island, a free trade zone in the Hormuz Strait which Iran is building up as a centre for foreign investment.

At the end of a four-day official visit, the Iranian news agency (IRNA) said in a separate report, he told reporters that Malaysia would buy steel, copper, gold, marble and decorative stones from Iran, the radio said. Malaysian firms had agreed to buy a liquid gas plant in Iran and cooperate in hotel building and other tourist industry projects, he said. "Under eight agreements signed in Teheran, trade exchanges are expected to top \$200 million," the radio quoted Mr. Mahathir as saying. IRNA quoted him as saying the agreements also covered oil, telecommunications, mining and health care but gave no details. Vice-President Hassan Habibi, seeing off Mr. Mahathir, said Iran proposed the formation of an Islamic international tourist agency to the Malaysians, the radio said. Mr. Mahathir, the most senior Malaysian official to visit Iran since Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution, held talks with supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani during his stay.

## Turkey under fire over human rights

WASHINGTON (AP) — Human rights activists who charged that abuses in Turkey are worsening were accused Monday by a Turkish government spokesman and others of minimising great progress and applying Western standards smugly.

"The human rights situation in Turkey is truly appalling," said Helsinki Watch, urging a cutoff of American aid.

Despite reforms announced by Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel's 14-month-old government, "there has been a marked decline in the human rights situation," Amnesty International asserted.

"Turkey has compressed into mere decades a democratisation process that, in the West, spanned at least two centuries," countered Turkish embassy First Secretary Namik Tan in an unusual debate on Capitol Hill.

The audience, including representatives of Turkish-Americans and Turkey's Kurdish minority, were invited to join the confrontation in a congressional hearing room.

The session was called by the U.S. Helsinki Committee, a group that monitors human rights in all 53 countries of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Monday was Turkey's turn.

"It is the height of conceit to judge other nations by standards (U.S.) were able to achieve only in the post-World War II era," said Heath Lowry, a professor at Georgetown University. Dr. Lowry, who said he does not represent the Turkish government.

Turkey and all other countries must fulfill the obligations of international humanitarian treaties they have subscribed to, said Mary Sue Hafner, the commission's general counsel. "The problem appears to be one of political will," she added.

Maryan Elahi, an attorney for Amnesty International, said Turkish political killings rose from 50 in 1991 to more than 300 in 1992, with little or no effort to prosecute those responsible. Promised reforms included no safeguards for political prisoners, and a new law appears to be "an empty gesture mainly intended to serve public relations purposes," he said.

Harun Kazaz, chief of the assembly of Turkish American associations, told Ms. Elahi, "We find your organisation extremely anti-Turkish... Amnesty's stand certainly does not make it easy for anybody to sit down and try to work out issues."

"We are not anti-Turkish or

...anti-any government," Ms. Elahi said, adding that amnesty would welcome investigation of all its allegations.

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## Home News

### Queen meets with officials attending population meeting

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Tuesday received at Nadwa Palace Executive Director of the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) Nafe Sadiq and reviewed with her projects and programmes funded by the UNFPA in Jordan and a concession loan after the border.

Her Majesty also discussed with Dr. Sadiq the Regional Population Conference which is currently being held in Amman.

Attending Dr. Sadiq's audience with the Queen were Chief of the Division for Arab States and Europe at UNFPA Ali Ugur Tuner, UNDP representative in Jordan, Osman Hashim, UNFPA's senior programme officer in Jordan Dirwas Alkhas.

Later, Queen Noor received Werner Fornos, president of the Population Institute in Washington D.C. Douglas Keare, chief of

the Population and Human Resources Division for the Middle East and North Africa Region at the World Bank.

Both sides discussed with Her Majesty possibilities of cooperation with Jordan and available assistance opportunities to help low-income, middle-aged women participate more actively in Jordan's economic growth and national development.

The United Nations official also examined selected items produced by Jordanian women benefiting from the Women in Development Project.

Products include garments, light shoes and slippers, medicinal herbs, condiments, and honey.

Earlier Tuesday, Dr. Sadiq and the accompanying delegation visited Noor Al Hussein Foundation and were briefed by its president, director general and other senior staff of its integrated and comprehensive approach to development and on the positive

results of the UNFPA-funded Women in Development Project which NHF launched in 1987 to help low-income, middle-aged women participate more actively in Jordan's economic growth and national development.

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Dr. Sadiq and the accompanying delegation then toured the NHF Design and Trade Centre, an offshoot of NHF's National Handicrafts Development Project which is extending technical, training and marketing assistance to over 2,000 Jordanian crafts men and women across Jordan.

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## Egyptian court launches retrial of Abdul Rahman

FAIYOUN, Egypt (R) — A state security court began a retrial Tuesday of the exiled spiritual leader of Muslim militants seeking to topple the Egyptian government and of suspects in New York's World Trade Centre blast.

The civilian high emergency security court in this desert oasis town charged Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman and 48 others with conspiracy in the 1989 murder of a policeman and "mobilizing the people to overthrow the government."

Eleven of Sheikh Abdul Rahman's co-defendants, locked in a cage inside the courthouse, told reporters they had been taken from their homes Tuesday morning to appear before the court.

Scores of riot police with shields and fixed bayonets ringed the courthouse in Faifyoun, Sheikh Abdul Rahman's home town and stronghold about 100 kilometres southwest of Cairo.

Sheikh Abdul Rahman and the others were acquitted of the same charges in 1989. Egyptian officials reopened the case last month and ordered the retrial after President Hosni Mubarak nullified the original verdict in January, judicial sources said.

Sheikh Abdul Rahman, a blind preacher revered by Egyptian Islamic fundamentalists, has lived in the New York area since 1990. Five of his alleged followers there are being held in connection with the February bombing of the World Trade Centre which killed six people and injured more than 1,000.

The government does not want the innocence of Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, they want to crush him," the preacher's lawyer Adel Aymouni told reporters.

He said Sheikh Abdul Rahman had received no formal legal summons to attend the retrial from the Egyptian embassy in Washington. He said he had spoken by telephone with his client last week.

It was not immediately clear

what penalties Sheikh Abdul Rahman and others would face if convicted, although they would have the right to appeal to Egypt's supreme court.

Mr. Aymouni said some of the other defendants had been outside Egypt since 1989.

Militants from Al Gamma'a Al Islamiya (Islamic Group), the main group fighting the government in a year-long surge of political violence, regard Sheikh Abdul Rahman as the spiritual guide behind their bid to topple the government and set up a purist Islamic state.

They have killed police, Christians and foreign tourists in their campaign, which has ruined the country's vital tourist industry, prompted ruthless police crackdown and tarnished the country's image in the international community.

Sheikh Abdul Rahman, who has been questioned by U.S. federal agents over the New York bombing, was tried and acquitted in 1982 of "sanctifying" the assassination the year before of Mr. Mubarak's predecessor, Anwar Sadat.

A U.S. immigration court has ruled the preacher should be deported for entering the country on false information, but Sheikh Abdul Rahman, who denies inciting violence, is appealing against that in a process his U.S. lawyers may take months.

Egyptian officials announced they would retry the preacher two weeks ago but political leaders have publicly played down his importance in the militant movement, saying he would be welcome to return home like any Egyptian citizen.

Sheikh Abdul Rahman worked for five years in Saudi Arabia, and travelled to Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan and other Muslim countries in the late 1980s.

Egyptian officials have accused him of sending cheques worth \$140,000 from the United States to fund militants in Egypt.

## King, Queen leave for Britain

(Continued from page 1)

other members of the Royal family.

The King was also seen off by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Royal Court Chief Khaled Al Karaki, the speakers of the Upper and Lower Houses of parliament, the deputy prime ministers and members of the Cabinet, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the mayor of Amman, the governor of the Public Security Department, senior officials and the British ambassador to Jordan.

Prince Hassan was sworn in as Regent during the King's absence.

A Royal Palace official said the King's 10-day visit is "private" but that he would pay a courtesy call on British Prime Minister John Major and discuss the U.S.-Russia-supported peace efforts.

The talks "will focus ways to advance Arab-Israeli negotiations," deadlocked over Israel's Dec. 17 expulsion of nearly 400 Palestinians from the occupied territories, the official told the Associated Press.

Before his departure, King Hussein, the supreme commander of the Armed Forces,

## Clinton says U.S. 'full partner'

(Continued from page 1)

George Bush, who exerted pressure on Israel to comply with U.S. wishes, may be softened by Mr. Clinton.

Mr. Mubarak said in a New York Times interview published Monday that Egyptian intelligence supplied the United States with general information that might have prevented the Feb. 26 bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York.

Mr. Clinton said he had "ordered a complete review of what the United States was told" by the Egyptians last year. Mr. Mubarak said the information did not involve "definite information" on the World Trade Centre bombing.

After his four-day visit to Washington, Mr. Mubarak is to fly to Paris for talks Wednesday with French President Francois Mitterrand.

"Both our nations have suf-

fared from the tragic consequences of terrorism," Mr. Clinton said.

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## Two soldiers look at Gaza's violence, see different stories

By Ron Kampeas  
The Associated Press

GAZA CITY, occupied Gaza Strip — This is the story of two Israeli soldiers stationed in the occupied territories: A pessimist and an optimist, a reservist and a professional officer, a man hates his job and one who loves it.

But it does not have a happy ending — or even an end in sight. In the fifth year of the Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation, the issues that brought the protest to a head are still unresolved. Frustration is mounting on both sides.

"There's a feeling of futility for soldiers in Gaza," says Sergeant T, carefully keeping watch from the back of a command car rumbling through Gaza City.

"Ten men did not even turn up for service," he adds, refer-

ring to members of his reserve unit who could face jail for refusing their annual month's duty in the Gaza Strip.

Major Eldad, a commander in northern Gaza, sees a different Gaza as he relaxes in a headquarters tent hung with maps, invigorated by a tour in the field.

"The army is in control and they (the Palestinians) are fatigued," he says.

Under military regulations, the soldiers' full names cannot be used. Both are young and unmarried, both serve in crack infantry units — the sergeant in the Golani Brigade and Maj. Eldad in the Givati Brigade.

They were interviewed as Israel tries to find new ways to battle a Palestinian uprising that has increasingly turned to the use of guns, including ambushes on soldiers.

In March alone, Gazans were blamed for eight Israeli

deaths in the strip and Israel itself, while 18 Palestinians were fatally shot in clashes with troops in Gaza.

Fearing that the army has lost control in Gaza, right-wing politicians have demanded the government move to a war footing there. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin rejected the idea, as well as calls by cabinet left-wingers that Israel unilaterally leave the strip.

Instead, last week he sealed off Gaza and the occupied West Bank indefinitely. This means 1.8 million Palestinians — including some 110,000 wage earners — cannot enter Israel. In the past, such closures have led to more violence in the occupied lands.

But Maj. Eldad, 28, dismisses suggestions that Gaza has deteriorated into a war situation. "The use of the word 'war' to describe a civil uprising reflects an ignorance of

military issues," said the beefy, crew-cut officer.

He blames the Israeli media for exaggerating events, saying the uprising was much worse five years ago when it began.

At that time the army faced mass demonstrations. Now, Maj. Eldad says he spends his time hunting down men wanted for armed attacks.

"The amateurs have gone home," he says. "The people are tired, so the hard core learns new tricks."

He says the use of guns represents the desperation of uprising leaders and predicts the morale of the attackers will be broken.

"I sleep maybe two hours a night. I don't let myself go home until I have captured at least one wanted man," the major says.

Sgt. T, 24, also says the situation in Gaza has changed.

"The other day, a soldier in

my unit who speaks Arabic translated graffiti for me," he says. "I read: 'Don't throw stones; we'll take care of them.' It was decorated with guns."

But the sergeant, who describes himself as right-wing, does not think the Palestinians are broken.

"You see a two-year-old picking up a pebble and tossing it at you, and you know it's here to stay," he says. "Gaza is a no-win situation, it is like a cancer under the belly of Israel ... we accomplish nothing by staying."

Sgt. T's commander orders his troops off the car. They cock their assault rifles and patrol Gaza City's Saladin Street, named after the famed Muslim warrior.

They maintain a steady jog, hugging the walls, four men on one side, three on the other. Another command car pro-

vides back-up.

It is Friday. Aside from the presence of the troops, it is a languid afternoon in the sunny, dusty town. Chickens turn on a spit in a barbecue shop, and a small girl sucks a popsicle.

Maj. Eldad, told of Sgt. T's views, notes that reservists bring moral considerations based on political beliefs here. I am a professional, I have only army considerations."

The army evidently agrees. It has announced plans to replace all reserve units in Gaza with regular troops.

Sgt. T returns from patrol as the sunlight fades. Under his visored helmet is a bright yellow baseball cap. He watches other soldiers, granted leaves for the Jewish Sabbath, waving down cars for lifts out of the strip.

"I don't even tell my parents I'm in Gaza," he says.

## New security moves seen in the making in Algeria

ALGIERS (AP) — Defence Minister Khaled Nezzar met Monday with the ambassadors of the United States and France, reportedly signalling that new security measures could be put in place shortly to counter Islamic extremists.

General Nezzar, the strongman of Algeria's five-man ruling committee, discussed "questions of common interest" in separate meetings with U.S. Ambassador Mary Ann Casey and French Ambassador Bernard Kessedjian, the official APS news agency reported without comment.

The embassies' defence attaches were present at the meetings, along with Gen. Nezzar's counsellors, APS said.

Reliable sources linked the meetings with promised new security measures, announced in March by Prime Minister Belaid Abul Salam, and said they would be put in place shortly.

The support of France, Algeria's top trading partner, and the United States are crucial to Algeria's economic recovery. The country's battered economy is seen as the motor behind the Muslim fundamentalist movement, whose banning spawned the violence.

The sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, provided no information on what the measures could entail. The prime minister never specified.

They would be in addition to a series of steps taken over the past 14 months to counter attacks by Islamic extremists that have left more than 600 people dead on both sides.

King Hussein congratulated Gen. Mirai on his new post and discussed with him issues of concern to the Armed Forces.

Also Tuesday, King Hussein received the Royal Court former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Field Marshal Fathi Abu Taleb.

King Hussein conferred upon Field Marshal Abu Taleb the distinguished Al Nada Medal in appreciation of his performance in service over the past 43 years.

King Hussein also conferred upon the director of the Civil Defence Department, Major-General Afif Al Gouli, the Al Iskial Medal of the First Order.

The King also conferred upon Lieutenant-General Salem Al Turk, former army chief of staff of the land forces, the Al Kawkab Medal of the First Order. Gen. Turk was retired this week.

Clinton says U.S. 'full partner'

(Continued from page 1)

ferred from the tragic consequences of terrorism," Mr. Clinton said.

Mr. Mubarak said in a New York Times interview published Monday that Egyptian intelligence supplied the United States with general information that might have prevented the Feb. 26 bombing of the World Trade Centre in New York.

Mr. Clinton said he had "ordered a complete review of what the United States was told" by the Egyptians last year. Mr. Mubarak said the information did not involve "definite information" on the World Trade Centre bombing.

After his four-day visit to Washington, Mr. Mubarak is to fly to Paris for talks Wednesday with French President Francois Mitterrand.

"Both our nations have suf-

## British woman continues battle for custody of 2 sons

CAIRO (AP) — A British mother battling her Egyptian husband for custody of their two sons resumed her 3½-year-old fight at court Monday vowing: "I won't give up."

Pamela Green, 38, brought two character witnesses to testify in the crowded south Cairo primary court. She went through 19 similar hearings in another court in February 1992 that it lacked jurisdiction.

Her husband's lawyer failed to produce two character witnesses and the court postponed the case to April 26 at his request.

Ms. Green and her Egyptian-born, British national husband, Abdul Salam Ahmad, were divorced in 1988. British courts gave her custody of daughter Yasmeen and sons Sawy and Sammie, but Mr. Ahmad flew the children back to Cairo for a vacation in 1989 and refused to take them back.

Ms. Green said her problem began when Mr. Ahmad telephoned her after arriving in Cairo with the children and "said he had some bad news."

"He told me that I would never see my children again. And that if I tried to come to Cairo for them, he would have me killed and buried and one would care because I am a foreigner," she said.

Ms. Green, wearing a navy blazer and a white-and-blue print skirt, spoke to the Associated Press at the courthouse.

"I borrowed money and came to Cairo. My former husband had left the three children with his parents and travelled to the United States," Ms. Green said. The

sources said.

"It is very difficult, but I won't give up."

## JORDANIAN FIRM CLINCHES "REMARKETER OF THE YEAR" AWARD

The authorized IBM dealer in Amman, General Computers & Electronics (GCE), was the recipient of the 1992 "Remarketer of the Year" award at the annual GBM Convention held in Malaysia from 29 to 31 March 1993.

Participants included IBM dealers from Jordan, Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Dubai, Lebanon, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Syria & Yemen.

The Remarketer of the Year award is presented annually to IBM dealers in the region for excellent sales & support achievements.

The inscription on GCE's Award Read:

*In Recognition  
of Exceptional Achievement  
on the part of*

**GENERAL COMPUTERS & ELECTRONICS**

*IBM Authorised Remarketer  
Remarketer of the year 1992*

**GBM**

**gce** General Computers & Electronics Co.  
IBM AUTHORIZED DEALER - PERSONAL COMPUTER  
TELE: 699-4200

**STUDIO HAIR**



Thomas Doll

## Vogts vows to get tough with players

BONN (R) — Germany coach Serti Vogts Monday dropped Lazio midfielder Thomas Doll for next week's friendly against Ghana and warned he was going to get tougher with selection after the world champions' recent disappointing form.

Vogts was very unhappy with Germany's poor showing in a lucky 1-0 victory over an under-strength Scotland side last month, especially in the wake of a 3-1 drubbing by Brazil in December.

With just over a year remaining until next year's World Cup, the dropping of former East German Doll, who was substituted in the Glasgow game, is clearly an example to the rest of the squad. "I can't be satisfied with the messy way we played for most of the game," Vogts said. "It's not on that some players are putting on a German shirt and going off for an afternoon stroll. I need to

remind them of their pride and honour."

But the tough new approach from the normally diplomatic Vogts indicates he is starting to feel the pressure as time runs out before the 1994 World Cup finals in the United States.

"I have had to listen to his excuses too many times in the past," the coach said. "Easter is a time for reflection. Thomas Doll should think a bit."

Vogts named uncapped 22-year-old midfielder Karlheinz Pilipsen from Borussia Moenchengladbach in Doll's place in the 19-man party for the Bochum friendly April 14.

"I would rather take a player like Pilipsen to the World Cup who, maybe does not have the class yet but will give everything," Vogts said. "I need to remind the players of the seriousness of the situation."



Eric Cantona jubilates after scoring a goal for his team, Manchester United, who won their match against Norwich 3-1.

MANCHESTER UNITED MOVE INTO 2ND PLACE: Manchester United exploded for three first-half goals in eight minutes to dismiss fellow title-contender Norwich, 3-1, in a key match Monday in England's Premier League. Scores by Ryan Giggs, Andrei Kanchelskis and Eric Cantona gave United its first win in five games, with six games to go. United is in second place just one point behind leader Aston Villa. Norwich fell to third, two points back.

## GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF  
& TANIAH HIRSCH  
Tivoli Media Services, Inc.

**CONJURING TRICKS OUT OF THIN AIR**  
West-Vuln. vulnerable. North  
deals.

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The bidding:  
North East South West  
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Opening lead: King of ♠

In his first inaugural address, Franklin D. Roosevelt warned that "the only thing to fear is fear itself." Afraid of the unknown, South found a way to go down in an unbeatable contract.

North's hand was on the borderline between an invitational jump raise of three hearts and a leap to game. Since almost all the points were prime, North took the more aggressive course. The final contract would have been the same in either case.

## Japanese town spends millions on soccer dream

KASHIMA (R) — Why would a small town in Japan splash out more than \$70 million to buy a retired Brazilian superstar and build a new stadium for him?

This drab industrial municipality of 45,000 people on Japan's east coast has no history of soccer. Yet Sumitomo Metal and Ibaraki Prefecture, to which Kashima belongs, have set out to create a soccer dream as a way of reviving the area.

Sumitomo, whose steel plant is the biggest local employer, stunned Kashima residents and the soccer world two years ago when it announced it had signed Zico, then 38, Brazil's most famous player after Pele, for the local team.

In October 1991, the Kashima Antlers Club was formally born with investment from five towns in the area and 43 local firms, many from the Sumitomo Group.

The Antlers Club is one of 10 founder members of Japan's new professional J-League, which kicks off May 15.

Work began on a new stadium in April 1992 in an area of woods and scrubland, and Antlers will inaugurate it May 4 in a friendly with Fluminense of Brazil.

The stadium, the country's first custom-built all-seat covered soccer arena, has 15,000 seats and an advanced sewage drainage system which, for the first time in Japan, will guarantee grass throughout the year.

Total cost is 8.2 billion yen (\$71 million), all put up by the Ibaraki authorities.

"We are known as a town with a tradition of martial arts," said Kashima mayor Takeshi Ikari. "We want to become famous as a Mecca for soccer. Let soccer be the fire to ignite the area and give it new life."

Posters speak of the "Antlers football dream."

As in other parts of Japan, soccer has become the most popular sport among schoolboys in Kashima over the last five years, overtaking baseball, the traditional favorite.

Yet the area has no soccer tradition. The Sumitomo team, on which the Antlers was built, played only in the second division of the pre-professional league.

So the club bought not only Zico, on a three-year contract worth \$1.5 million, but also fellow Brazilian international Carlos Alberto Souza Dos Santos, six Japanese players and a coach from the Honda team.

In 58 games for Brazil, Zico scored 60 goals, only to the legendary Pele. He retired in 1990 and became Brazil's first sports ambassador, a post he gave up on joining the Antlers.

"The start of a professional league is a turning point for soccer in Japan. This is a challenge for me," said Zico, explaining why he came out of retirement.

"I want to make whatever contribution I can and make Antlers a famous name in the soccer world," he said.

## Becker's health shrouded in mystery

LONDON (AP) — On the day injury-plagued Boris Becker should have been playing a tournament in Japan, the German tennis star was on a tennis court in Monte Carlo facing Henri Leconte.

The health of the world's fourth-ranked player has been shrouded in mystery recently over his withdrawal from five tournaments in a row.

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Boris Becker

may come back a week earlier to play in Nice, France, if his condition improves.

**Top 10 money winners in tennis this year, according to a list issued by the Women's Tennis Association and the men's ATP tour:**

1. Steffi Graf	\$485,175
2. Monica Seles	\$429,138
3. Arantxa Sanchez Vicario	\$369,736
4. Martina Navratilova	\$281,230
5. Gigi Fernandez	\$187,108
6. Natasha Zvereva	\$184,388
7. Jana Novotna	\$179,097
8. Gabriela Sabatini	\$176,609
9. Mary Joe Fernandez	\$173,928
10. Conchita Martinez	\$173,541

## SPORTS NEWS IN BRIEF

### North Carolina 77, Michigan 71 in NCAA final

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Chris Webber made one big play after another for Michigan, and then he made the biggest mistake of the night. With the Wolverines trailing North Carolina 73-71 in the NCAA title game Monday night, Webber rebounded a missed free throw and raced upcourt. With 11 seconds left, he called timeout. But Michigan had no timeouts left. As a result, a technical foul was called against the Wolverines and Donald Williams made both free throws to secure the Tar Heels' 77-71 victory. Webber was clearly upset. From the time he left the court until the time he reached the locker room, he walked with his head down. He pushed aside one of the television cameramen walking in his path. Webber called last year's loss to Duke in the championship game the lowest point in his life. "It's the same," he said. "It's the exact same."

### Sampras advances into third round

TOKYO (AP) — Second-seeded Pete Sampras, firing 15 service aces, beat Australian Jamie Morgan 7-5, 6-3 Tuesday in the \$1.2 million Japan Open tennis tournament. Morgan hit 13 aces in reply against Sampras, who is battling to move up to the world No. 1 ranking. He now trails fellow American Jim Courier, the top seed here, 3,559 points to 3,829. In first-round matches, 12th-seeded Kenneth Carlsen of Denmark beat American qualifier Tom Mercer 6-4, 6-1. Australian qualifier Neil Borwick upset 14th-seeded American Jim Grabb 6-1, 6-1, and Daniel Vacek of the Czech Republic downed Swedish qualifier Rickard Bergh 6-4, 6-3. No. 16 seed Andrei Chersakov of Russia beat Germany's Karsten Braasch 6-7 (3-7), 7-5, 6-4, and American Jonathan Stark defeated Martin Streibl of the Czech Republic 6-4, 6-7 (5-7), 6-8.

**Peanuts**



## Andy Capp



## Mutt 'n' Jeff



## HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY APRIL 7, 1993

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

**GENERAL TENDENCIES:** A somewhat contentious atmosphere is in the air today and tonight and your affairs could be in quick disarray if you are impatient, scrappy or try to get things moving without proper deliberation.

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) Private worries can make you act as you normally would not so keep your good humor despite provocations and tonight refrain from battles, tiffs.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) Friends and acquaintances do not seem aware of your standpoint today so go it on your own and tonight sociability can be disappointing.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) The day can bring some difficulties where credit or career interests are concerned but the afternoon and evening find friends to be a comrade mood.

**MOON CHILDREN:** (June 22 to July 21) Contests with a newcomer to see who knows the most merely leads or strife so avoid discussions while later you must not annoy a bigwig.

**LEO:** (July 22 to August 21) Think about what you can do to get obligations met in a harmonious fashion despite pressures to be contentious. tonight avoid going off on a tangent.

**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) Your discontentment today can lead you into a considerable amount of trouble if you express it openly. tonight be careful of a practical error.

open regarding an associate that makes you see red but use self control and do nothing while later don't argue over an account.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 22) Tasks seem to be too much of a pressure without proper results but keep plugging away and later don't take up an argument with a partner.

**SCORPIO:** (October 23 to November 21) You are tempted to take an outside interest that will turn out to be much too expensive for you to continue. tonight avoid an upset fellow associate.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) Home can be the scene to some pretty difficult moments unless you keep away from subjects that cause strife but tonight don't force a good time.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 20) This is certainly the day to avoid any carelessness whether on the highway or otherwise in motion while later quarrels can occur at home.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 21 to February 19) This is your day for showing that you can say no to some scheme that could side you out of your assets. tonight use care in motion such as the highway.

**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) Your discontentment today can lead you into a considerable amount of trouble if you express it openly. tonight be careful of a practical error.

## THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen

GLASBERGEN

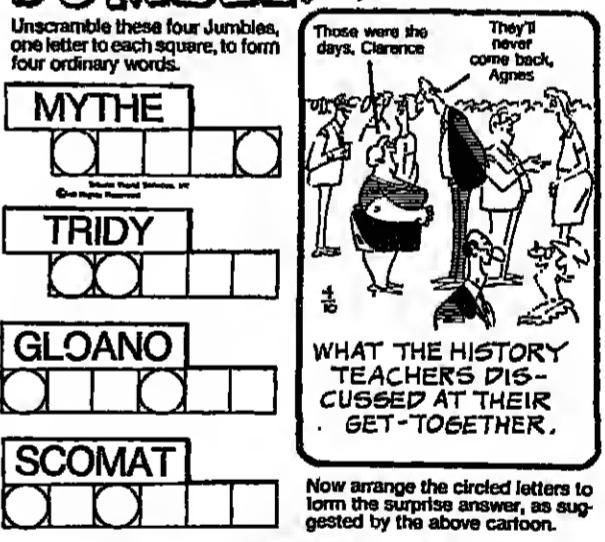


"We should discuss our differences in a respectful and productive manner. But I'd rather just give you a nogie!"

## JUMBLE

THAT'S SCRABBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold



# Economy

## IN BRIEF

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## UAE sets 10% capital adequacy requirement

ABU DHABI (R) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is tightening control of its banks by requiring them to maintain capital adequacy levels of 10 per cent, higher than standards set by the bank for International Settlements (BIS).

The UAE central bank said Monday it was setting quarterly deadlines for banks to report their capital adequacy levels to prove they are in line with the rule, which goes into effect on July 1.

Capital adequacy is the ratio between shareholders' equity and assets. Sufficient levels are intended to minimise the risk to a bank's creditors and depositors.

"This ratio obliges banks to maintain, at all times, a minimum level of 10 per cent of total risk weighted assets relative to the capital base," the bank said in a

statement. "Banks in the UAE already now have a large capital base, which makes it possible to set a higher ratio than recommended by the BIS-based committee."

The decision follows repeated urging by the Arab League and the BIS for banks to maintain a minimum eight per cent capital adequacy.

The central bank said last June it would enforce the BIS ratio levels. It informed UAE commercial banks Sunday they must submit reports based on two types of capital used in calculating the ratio within two weeks of the end of each quarter.

One banker said in calculating the ratio, banks will have to deduct shortfalls in their provisions every year instead of rolling over money set aside for potential

losses year after year.

"They will have to deal with their provisions each year or it will have an effect on their capital adequacy," he said.

Bankers said some of the UAE's 46 commercial banks continued to have ratios of less than four per cent. Ratios already are as high as 10 per cent among the stronger banks.

"Some UAE banks will be faced with the problem and may have to merge," a banker said.

The central bank said it wanted to provide a cushion against losses to depositors and customers and increase confidence in the sector.

UAE banks suffered losses in the mid-1980s after a rush in lending during the oil boom. Many banks closed or merged after loans failed to perform.

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## Gas pipeline to Armenia blown up for 5th time in Georgia

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Gas supplies to land-locked Armenia were cut off Tuesday after a pipeline was blown up in Georgia for the fifth time this year. RIA news agency said.

Armenia, which is desperately short of fuel, depends on Georgia for gas supplies. Alternative routes through Azerbaijan are closed because of a long-running conflict over the enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh.

RIA, quoting an Armenian presidential spokesman, said the explosion took place overnight. A government commission had been dispatched to assess the damage.

The pipeline was also blown up last month. There were two explosions in February and one in January.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attacks.

But the Marneulski area, where all the explosions took place, has a large Azeri population. Armenian officials have blamed Azeris for the previous attacks because of the conflict between their peoples in Karabakh.

The Azeri government has denied any role.

Azerbaijan said Tuesday it repelled Armenian troops from the outskirts of the town of Fizuli, south of the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The fighting marked Azerbaijan's first claimed victory in almost a week of heavy combat around Nagorno-Karabakh, a region populated mainly by Christians.

## Hijacked Chinese airliner returns

PEKING (R) — A Chinese airliner hijacked to Taiwan Tuesday flew back to China's southern city of Guangzhou, Chinese aviation authorities said.

The China Southern Airlines Boeing 757 with 200 people on board was ordered to fly to Taiwan by two hijackers armed with pistols and carrying cyanide tablets.

Nationalist authorities refuelled the plane and told it to fly back to China via Hong Kong to avoid breaking their ban on direct air links between the island and mainland China.

But the plane apparently ignored the directive and flew directly to Guangzhou, formerly known as Canton, which is just a short hop across the Hong Kong border.

The hijackers had earlier surrendered to Taiwan police. They remained in custody and Taiwan officials have not yet responded to Peking's request to repatriate the men.

"The plane has arrived in

ian Armenians but located inside predominantly Muslim Azerbaijan.

Armenia has denied its forces attacked the Fizuli area.

Five years of fighting over the region, which seeks independence has killed more than 3,000 people and left tens of thousands homeless in the bloodiest conflict in the former Soviet Union.

The U.N. Security Council

scheduled a closed-door meeting

Tuesday to discuss the fighting at the request of neighbouring Turkey, which has cultural and ethnic ties with Azerbaijan.

Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosian issued a statement

blaming Turkey and Azerbaijan for the latest fighting.

Karabakh Armenian troops captured nearly nearly 1,000 square kilometres of Azerbaijani territory in an offensive that began last weekend as warmer spring weather enveloped the Caucasus Mountains.

The captured land includes the Kelbajar region, a narrow, mountainous strip of Azerbaijan separating Nagorno-Karabakh from Armenia. That victory opened a second corridor between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh.

Armenia seized a corridor through the town of Lachin last year and has used it to get troops and supplies into the enclave.

Azerbaijan said Monday that Armenian troops had launched an offensive in the Fizuli region, south of the enclave near Azerbaijan's border with Iran. It said

Armenians were firing artillery and rockets at the regional capital, also called Fizuli, from surrounding hills.

The Armenians were about two kilometres from Fizuli when Azerbaijani troops forced them to retreat to positions five to seven kilometres outside the town. Khikmet Gajizade, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Russia, told reporters Tuesday.

Armenian officials have denied attacking Fizuli, although they said Armenian forces captured hills in the district last week from which Azerbaijani troops had been shelling Nagorno-Karabakh.

"Armenia thwarting all peacemaking efforts in a bid to seize as much territory as possible so as to talk to Azerbaijan from the position of strength," Mr. Gajizade said.

In Damascus, Syria, Armenian Foreign Minister Vahan Papasian denied his nation has any territorial ambitions in Azerbaijan.

He told a news conference Armenia would back whatever settlement the Azerbaijani government and the Armenian inhabitants of Nagorno-Karabakh reach. But added that Azerbaijan was not serious about settling the conflict.

On Monday, Turkey closed its airspace to all scheduled, charter and relief flights, and halted the overland delivery of wheat supplies from France to Armenia.

Turkish President Turgut Ozal threatened his country would "bare its teeth" against Armenia.

but stopped short of calling for Turkish military intervention.

Asked about the Turkish government's actions, Mr. Papasian said: "Turkey believes that the current dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh is an internal issue without taking into consideration that Azerbaijan is an independent republic that should adopt its political path and not be subservient to Turkey."

He also said that Armenia's regular army has never participated in any attacks against Azerbaijan, saying military operations were mounted by "the defence forces of Karabakh."

He said, "any solution that satisfies Karabakh's government will be acceptable to the Armenian government."

But he added, "the Azerbaijani government does not seek a peaceful solution. It rather uses terrorism against Karabakh as well as Armenia."

In Geneva, peace talks sponsored by the United States, Russia and Turkey broke down because of the fighting. Azerbaijani Foreign Minister, Teyfik Kazimov, said Monday there was no point in continuing and demanded Armenia withdraw from the newly captured territory as a condition for further talks.

Turkey asked the U.N. Security Council to condemn "the Armenian aggression against Azerbaijan" and demand that Armenia withdraw its forces and stop its military offensive.



Karabakh Armenian soldiers board their truck for an attack against Azeri forces (AFP photo).

## Bosnian Muslims threaten talks boycott as Srebrenica convoy leaves

SARAJEVO (R) — A U.N. convoy headed for Srebrenica to evacuate refugees Tuesday but Muslims said they would boycott top level military talks with Croats and Serbs because of fighting around the besieged Muslim town.

The Bosnian Serb army waved the 18-truck convoy through after delaying it for an hour on the border between Serbia and Bosnia when it arrived from Belgrade.

U.N. aid officials said it would start the evacuation of 15,000 hungry and frightened refugees from Srebrenica which Serbs have blockaded since the civil war started a year ago.

But as fighting continued around it in defiance of a ceasefire agreed by the three warring sides, the Muslim-led Bosnian army said it would not go to talks organised by U.N. peacekeepers Tuesday with Croat and Serb military commanders.

Sarajevo Radio said the Bosnians sent a letter to the head of U.N. forces in former Yugoslavia saying they felt morally constrained from attending the talks at Sarajevo Airport because of Serb attacks on Srebrenica where thousands of Muslims are trapped.

The (magistrates) warnings strike at the heart of the old Christian Democratic Party (DC), said the centre-right Giornale daily newspaper.

"The DC is trembling and tearing itself to pieces," wrote editorialist Stefano Foli in Milan's Corriere Della Sera.

The warning to Mr. Forlani appeared to mark the definitive end of the so-called CAF (Craxi-Andreotti-Forlani) triumvirate that governed Italy in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Former Socialist leader and Prime Minister Bettino Craxi is under investigation in 14 separate cases.

The warnings were particularly destabilising for Italy's largest party because it is in the throes of an internal revolt by younger members who want a clean break with the old guard represented by Mr. Andreotti, 74, and Mr. Forlani, 67.

"The effects (of the corruption scandal) have reached the very top, to the men who symbolise the old guard DC," said La Stampa of Turin.

"The North must be stopped without fail," a presidential spokesman quoted Mr. Kim as telling the meeting.

"The North may resort out of desperation to acts of provocation after totally alienating itself from the world community by rejecting legitimate international demands for nuclear transparency," Mr. Kim said.

On March 9, three days before its pull-out from the NPT, Pyongyang went on a "semi-war" alert after it accused the United States of fuelling tension by staging

desperation to acts of provocation after totally alienating itself from the world community by rejecting legitimate international demands for nuclear transparency," Mr. Kim said.

North Korea rejected the inspection saying they were military facilities and had nothing to do with nuclear weapons. North Korea says it is not developing nuclear arms.

Following the IAEA decision, the United States, Russia and Britain, guarantors of the NPT urged Pyongyang to comply fully with the pact.

**Muto replaces Watanabe as Japan foreign minister**

TOKYO (R) — Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa named a veteran trade negotiator to replace ailing Foreign Minister Michio Watanabe, who resigned earlier Tuesday because of a failing health.

Kiulet Muto, 66, a former farm and trade minister, told reporters he had accepted the position. He is to be formally appointed foreign minister Wednesday.

"It is a very tough time for Japan's diplomacy," Mr. Muto said on national television. "I would like to inherit the positive diplomacy of Mr. Watanabe."

Mr. Watanabe, 69, told Mr. Miyazawa he was stepping down as foreign and deputy prime minister because of his health. While Mr. Muto will fill the foreign minister portfolio, the deputy prime minister will remain vacant, Mr. Miyazawa said.

Last year, Mr. Watanabe underwent gall bladder surgery and was recently commuting to parliament from hospital after becoming ill in February.

The English-language daily *Yomiuri*, sister publication of

## Probes leave top Italian party reeling

ROME (R) — Italy's Christian Democratic Party, which had a stranglehold on power for 40 years, has been struck to its heart by the latest developments in a huge corruption scandal, commentators said Tuesday.

Police said the hijackers were ready to swallow the cyanide pills if the hijacking failed.

The CAAC earlier said it had asked Taiwanese authorities to return the hijackers.

Tseng Chi-Shui, director of Taiwan's Aviation Police, told a news conference he could not say whether Taiwan would grant the hijackers asylum, charge them with air piracy or repatriate them to China.

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